To the Honorable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada.

The Petition of the undersigned, Manufacturers of Timber, Merchants, and others interested in the Timber Trade of Canada:

HUMBLY REPRESENTS,—

That your petitioners regard with great apprehension the "Public Lands Bill" introduced into your honorable House by the Honorable Louis V. Sicotte, your petitioners being impressed with the conviction, that, should the said "Bill," in its present form, pass into Law, the greatest injury will ensue to the timber and lumber trade of this Province;

And your petitioners would humbly represent;

That the holders of timber limits have expended vast sums of money in permanent improvements, such as the erection of Mills and all their varied dependancies, the making of Farms, of Roads, and Bridges, Booms and Slides, and the improvement of the Channels of Rivers, for the purpose of driving and bringing down timber and saw logs, and in various other ways in connection with their lumbering operations.

That they have expended large capital in this manner, in the faith that they would be protected by the Government of this Province in the tenure of the timber limits, which they have acquired, and for which they pay an annual rent to the Government: and also many limits which have become valuable in consequence of improvements, or from other causes, have been purchased by the present owners, from their predecessors, for very large considerations, and such purchases or transfers have been authorised, or formally acknowledged by the Government.

That nearly every large Saw Mill in Canada depends, for its support on the reserves of timber which have been acquired by the owner, and for which he pays heavy ground rents to the Government; reserves, which are invariably acquired by the owners of Mills to insure the necessary supply of logs. That most of the large Saw Mills in Canada would never have been built on the extensive scale on which they are now constructed, had the owners not had it in their power to secure a sufficient extent of timber lands to afford a supply of timber for years; as well as a ready access to the timber lands from which their supplies would be derived.

That under the Bill alluded to, the holders of timber limits would be exposed to grievous injustice. The Bill puts it in the power of speculators who may pretend to be settlers, to select and buy the best timber lots within the limits held by any person under license, and under this Bill (Section 38,) the receipt given for the first instalment is to serve them all the purposes of a patent. Thus, not only would the limit holders be deprived of the timber, to obtain which they have paid large sums to the Government, and in faith of the guaranteed possession of which, they have invested and laid out so much money, but they would even be deprived of the privilege of passing over such lots, notwithstanding the improvements they may have made, even though the same may afford the only practicable road for drawing the timber from the neighbouring lots to the nearest stream;

Your petitioners most respectfully represent, that, the progress of the settlement of this Country and the operations of the Lumber trade, have gone, and now go on together hand in hand, the latter cannot be injured without the former being retarded; Your petitioners have every reason to desire the speedy settlement of those parts of the Country in which they carry on lumbering operations The settler raises provisions for the lumberer and fodder for his horses, while the latter afford to the former a ready market for their produce, they are thus a mutual benefit to each other. Under the present regulations the *bona fide* settler can acquire and deprive the lumberer of any of his timber lots, and therefore the timber licenses do not in any way interfere with the settlement of the Country, but if the conditions of settlement are not complied with, the lands are restored to the holders of the license, a regulation which gives equal justice and cannot fail to be satisfactory to both parties.

That the proposed new system would result in great loss to the revenue, the great bulk of the timber lands are not fit for agriculture, and they would be bought for the sake of the timber, the duty on which, in innumerable instances, would be many times more than the price of the lands. If a *bona fide* settlement be the object, the land will be bought for its own sake, but if the object be that of getting the timber, the land will be abandoned as soon as the timber is cut.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that the present regulations and conditions

with respect to actual settlement, the cutting of timber and the restoration to the limit holder of the lands not actually settled, may be continued in full force, and that the Bill in question may not pass into law without some provisions being introduced which will prevent the possibility of any of the evil results apprehended by your petitioners.

And as in duty bound your petitioners will ever pray.

Quebec, 26th June, 1858.

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